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ABSTRACT

This essay examines the ways in which music, as a discipline, has been influenced by feminist scholarship in the field. It explains that during the 1970s, music scholars began to recover the history of women composers and musicians, and that by the 1980s scholars such as Susan McClary had begun to explore such issues as musical semiotics and constructions of femininity and masculinity; sexual differences within the vocabulary of music theory; and aspects of desire as mapped onto tonality. Feminist scholars' rejection of the mind-body split has modified several areas of musical understanding, such as the recognition that "real" women (and men) perform music; acknowledging the physical response to music; linking musicality with sexuality or pleasure; and admitting the physical experience of performance as significant to music's meaning. Feminist musicology has challenged conventional wisdom in regard to the concept of musical greatness or genius, the primacy of Western art music in the canon, the periodization of music history, and the musical form's relation to (gender) ideology. Includes a list of electronic resources. A 195-item bibliography contains information on books and articles; special journal issues; specialized journals; and electronic resources. (MDM)

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MUSIC

Discipline Analysis

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WOMEN in the CURRICULUM

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J. Michele Edwards

Macalester College

National Center for
Curriculum Transformation
Resources on Women
1997

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PREFACE

Since the 1970s feminist and multicultural scholarship has been challenging the traditional content, organization, methodologies, and epistemologies of the academic disciplines. By now this scholarship is formidable in both quantity and quality and in its engagement of complex issues. The National Center for Curriculum Transformation Resources on Women is therefore publishing a series of essays that provide brief, succinct overviews of the new scholarship. Outstanding scholars in the disciplines generously agreed to write the essays, which are intended to help faculty who want to revise courses in light of the new information and perspectives. Each essay is accompanied by a bibliography that includes references for further reading, resources for the classroom, and electronic resources.

Elaine Hedges

Series Editor

MUSIC

Within the humanities and fine arts, music was slower than most other disciplines to develop new directions emerging from feminist theory as well as from cultural studies. Resistance to feminist theory was rooted not only in patriarchy, but also in resistance to socially grounded criticism. Earlier scholars and teachers conventionally assumed music was outside or above politics and its power struggles. Meaning in music was touted as transcendent, as unencumbered by social realities. One of the major contributions of feminist criticism, along with work in cultural studies and queer theory, has been to explore music as social discourse and to show that such apparent neutrality—or the separation of aesthetic experience from lived experience—does not and cannot exist.

During the early 1970s, music scholars began to recover the history of women composers and musicians; however, initial research often replicated the methodology and questions of traditional musicology or scholarship about men making music. Likewise, the focus was on the white Western European tradition of concert music and primarily about a small group of exceptional composers and compositions. Gradually over the past quarter century, the range of topics has expanded, and the sharp dualism of high/low has diminished with the inclusion of popular music, world music, music by people of color, and music of everyday life. New arenas of investigation also emerged,

e.g., the study of music's financial sponsors; its audience and reception; and performers and performance. Despite shortcomings, Sophie Drinker's *Music and Women* (1948) is a precursor of these recent feminist directions, focusing on a range of musical expression in women's everyday lives, looking significantly to pre-Christian and non-Western cultures, and based on a commitment to participatory music-making.

The nature of scholarship related to women, feminism, gender, and music shifted in the 1980s, developing a more sophisticated framework stimulated in particular by feminist theory and criticism in literary and film studies. Susan McClary's work was a notable and particularly high profile part of this. In her groundbreaking essay collection, *Feminine Endings*, McClary identified five principal areas of inquiry for her feminist work:

1. musical constructions of gender and sexuality (7);
2. gendered aspects of traditional music theory (9);
3. gender and sexuality in musical narrative (12);
4. music as gendered discourse (17); and
5. discursive strategies of women musicians (18).

McClary's explorations include such issues as: musical semiotics and constructions of femininity and masculinity; striking articulations of beliefs about sexual difference within the vocabulary of music theory; aspects of desire and power as mapped onto tonality with its reliance on delayed gratification and inevitable tonic closure; and the impact of the associative link between music and effeminacy. Neither gender ideology nor its manifestation in music is static, and scholars have increasingly considered the fluidity and ambiguity of gender signification. After three

chapters examining canonical works by men, McClary focuses the final three chapters on "recent music by women composers who deliberately problematize their sexual identities within their musical discourses" (32). McClary's five themes remain important in feminist music criticism today.

Feminist music criticism, like feminist theory in general, confronts issues surrounding access by women and discrimination or bias against women. Some studies identify limitations imposed by society on women: educational and employment barriers, domestic responsibilities, overt discrimination, restriction of public activity, and narrow recognition. Scholars have also noted particular circumstances which fostered women's musical activity. For women living during at least the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries in Western Europe, these situations included a musical family; birth into a noble, patrician, or professional family; life in a convent; access to education through the increased availability of private music instruction; and financial security. Women's exclusion from various areas of performance—churches and synagogues, some instruments, and even the portrayal of women in opera—resulted not only in curtailed opportunities as performers, but also inhibited education and essential experience for women's compositional development. The details of exclusion and bias against women vary with time and place, yet consistently activities of women have been devalued and proscribed. The essays in *Women and Music in Cross-Cultural Perspective* edited by ethnomusicologist Ellen Koskoff, examine cross-cultural experiences of women and pose two central questions of significance for feminist criticism: "First, to what degree does a society's gender ideology and resulting gender-related behaviors affect its musical thought and practice? And second, how does music function in society to reflect or affect inter-gender relations?" (1).

The limited inclusion of women in the musical canon (or in fact canons) is a related concern. Blending theoretical ideas with practices in music, Marcia Citron in *Gender and the Musical Canon* has illuminated canon formation; practices and biases leading to women's exclusion from the canon; and the broad ramifications for women of their exclusion from "standard" repertoire and the academic curriculum. The feminist critique challenges us not only to give greater representation to compositions by women, but also to reexamine the significance of musical works and their programming. *Women and Music: A History* edited by Karin Pendle provides a parallel to the widely used "men and music" histories, but also incorporates some feminist critical strategies and additional topics (popular music, non-Western music, feminist musical aesthetics, and women's supportive roles for creating a musical culture).

As with other humanistic scholars, musicologists continue to wrestle with the issue of essentialism, e.g., analysis based on the single biological category of "woman." Feminist scholars, sometimes accused of essentialism, work to avoid this by handling gender categories as social constructions, not biological givens, and by considering the intersection of gender with other defining categories such as sexuality, class, and race/ethnicity. In a review of *Queering the Pitch*, Ruth A. Solie noted that "whiffs" of essentialism, the "*bête noire* of all identity-based analysis," are present in this book, but that "the eagle-eyed can always cry 'essentialism!' when a dismissive gesture is felt necessary" (*Journal of the American Musicological Society* 48.2 [summer 1995]: 321-22). This potential difficulty is apparent in the following questions: How does gender—along with race/ethnicity, sexuality and class—affect the production, performance, and reception of music? How do psycho-social-sexual elements shape a life and

then shape that person's musical creations? How is a person's identity or subjectivity made manifest, shadowed or closeted through music? Although the theoretical stance seems clear, avoiding all hints of essentialism in feminist analysis is more difficult.

Feminist scholars' rejection of the mind-body split, especially as manifest in Cartesian philosophy, has modified several areas of musical understanding, for example, recognizing that "real" women (and men) perform music; acknowledging the physical response to music; linking musicality with sexuality or pleasure; admitting the physical experience of performance as significant to music's meaning; and dealing with the signification of desire. It has also brought shifts to the understanding of authorial voice and what is appropriately counted as evidence. Going well-beyond the grammatical "I" to include a clear subject position of the author, feminist music criticism often acknowledges the personal engagement of the analyst in the analytical process and interpretation. Judith Peraino describes this experience as one which "brought about a personal catharsis by suturing the Cartesian-like split of the personal and the professional" ("I Am an Opera: Identifying with Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*," in *En travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, ed. Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith, 128). Rather than value the "objectivity" claimed by mainstream musicology, feminist music criticism welcomes the inclusion of authors—their subject position, their "hearing" or reception of music—in the analytical process and interpretation of music. In elaborating on Sandra Harding's phrase "thinking from women's lives," Suzanne G. Cusick describes how this feminist approach has affected her research about Francesca Caccini: "I have deliberately chosen, as well, to pollute with the textual presence of 'I' what might have been a thoroughly objective text describing archival discoveries. My motiva-

tions and my agenda as a woman, musician, and feminist are central and necessary to the framing of questions that led to these discoveries. I want to acknowledge the position from which another decade of Caccini's life became visible again, in part as an example of what difference gender and subjectivity can make in the apparently objective business of combing archives for documents" (""Thinking from Women's Lives': Francesca Caccini after 1627," in *Rediscovering the Muses. Women's Musical Traditions*, ed. Kimberly Marshall, 208).

Multicultural critiques of music have promoted the recovery of musical activities by people of color; however, little published scholarship theorizes in such areas as Black feminist music criticism or offers a feminist critique of Native American music. Queer theory has developed more quickly, led by innovative scholars such as Elizabeth Wood, Philip Brett, and Suzanne G. Cusick. In the preface to *Queering the Pitch*, the first collection of lesbian and gay musicology, the editors indicate common points with feminist scholars: "The concern in this book, then, is less with identities than with representations, performances, and roles. Its emphasis is on throwing into question old labels and their meanings so as to reassociate music with lived experience and the broader patterns of discourse and culture that music both mirrors and actively produces" (viii-ix).

Musicology, proposed as a separate discipline only in 1863 by Friedrich Chrysander, has historically focused on "genius" composers of Western art music and their notated works which were believed to be universal and superior to other music. The discipline concentrated initially on the biographies of a few "great men" and then in mid-twentieth century on formal analysis of "the work itself," i.e., the musical score. These foundations positioned archival research, manuscript studies, and editing scores

among the primary and valued activities for scholars. Feminist music criticism, together with queer musicology and cultural studies, has already been a crucial component in the revitalization of music studies. Through the study of women musicians and compositions by women, feminist musicologists have changed the nature of some traditional topics. Their work in both compensatory herstory and feminist theory has led to rethinking some conventional topics: periodization of music history, implications of genre studies, and musical form's relation to (gender) ideology. They have raised questions about the concept of greatness or genius and investigated aspects of power and music. Feminist scholars are also helping to move the discipline beyond formalism or positivism toward cultural interpretation of music and musical activities, and to develop a socially grounded criticism of music in context. Although not everyone agrees, I maintain that these new directions enrich and complement, rather than conflict with, earlier paradigms and methodologies. A combination of elements—inclusion of women and various forms of cultural criticism—is beginning to transform the very constitution of the discipline of music itself.

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Hot Wire: The Journal of Women's Music and Culture [Ceased publication with vol. 10, no. 3 (September 1994)]

International Alliance for Women in Music Journal (Carolyn Bremer, IAWM Membership Dir., School of Music, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK 73019)

The Maud Powell Signature (5333 N. 26th St., Arlington, VA 22207)

Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture [New refereed journal to be published by IAWM beginning in winter 1996/97.]

Women of Note Quarterly (NW 310 Wawawai Rd., Pullman, WA 99163)

Electronic Resources

Electronic Mail Lists

iawm-request@acuvax.acu.edu
gen-mus-majordomo@virginia.edu

Internet Websites

http://ezinfo.ucs.indiana.edu/~daksmith/index.html
Clara Schumann '96; developed by David Kenneth Smith (e-mail address: daksmith@indiana.edu); created to commemorate the centennial of Clara Schumann's death in 1896 and to promote performance of her works during 1996; includes biographical information, select bibliographies, list of works, and calendar of performances.

http://hamp.hampshire.edu/~pswF94/femme/lafemme.html
She's Got the Beat (Contemporary Women Composers and Musicians); resource for rock, pop, country, and jazz women in music; information and links on individual song writers, singers, and instrumentalists including biographical information, discographies, on-line fan clubs; organizations, radio stations, record labels, and stores.

http://musdra.ucdavis.edu/Documents/AMS/musicology_www.html
WWW Sites of Interest to Musicologists; developed by American Musicological Society.

http://musdra.ucdavis.edu/Documents/faculty/car.html
Bibliographic List of Published Songs Composed by American and British Women, ca. 1890-1930; developed by Christopher Reynolds; searchable database of over 2700 titles by 453 women; short introductory essay.

http://music.acu.edu/www/iawm/home.html
International Alliance for Women in Music homepage; developed by Sally Reid (e-mail address: reid@acuvax.acu.edu); considerable number of links related to women and music, including syllabi.

http://pages.nyu.edu/~whitwrth/
Early Music Women Composers Web Page; Sarah Whitworth (e-mail address: whitwrth@is2.nyu.edu); extensive list of medieval, renaissance and baroque women composers; books listing their extant works; list of CDs; links devoted to early music and/or women composers.

http://www.sdsmt.edu/choralnet
ChoralNet Resource Site with access to file of Choralist posts about women composers, including "Choral Potpourri: Literature by Women Composers" by J. Michele Edwards (e-mail address: edwards@macalester.edu), an annotated repertoire list; follow URL: gopher://silver.sdsmt.edu/11/pub/choralist, then choose reference/composers/women.cmp; also accessible via gopher.sdsmt.edu or ftp.sdsmt.edu .

http://www.ism.net/~cmsweb/f&d/gender.html
Music, Women, and Gender Issues; developed by College Music Society, Committee for Music, Women, and Gender Issues.

http://www.lib.washington.edu/libinfo/libunits/soc-hum/music/women.html
Women in Music; includes syllabi, bibliography of sources related to women's studies, gender studies, feminism, and music, including early music.

http://amadeus.siba.fi/~namu
Finnish Association "Woman and Music" (Nainen ja Musiikki = NaMu).

http://www.sun.rhbnc.ac.uk/Music/
Royal Holloway, University of London, Department of Music; developed by Geoffrey Chew (e-mail address: chew@sun.rhbnc.ac.uk); women and music syllabi, plus other links.

http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/7282/
Women Composers: A Bibliography of Internet Resources; developed by Tara Guthrie (e-mail address: tsguthri@hamlet.uncg.edu). Organized by category: bibliography and reference; listings of women composers; research and study; publishers and vendors; discographies; repertoire and performing ensembles; journals, listservs, and news groups; and other links.

http://www.val.net/VillageSounds/Muse/index.html
Muse Magazine: The Journal of Women in Music, web-published magazine provides information on contemporary and popular female composers and musicians; based in Los Angeles; includes CD and concert reviews; other links.

http://www.wmich.edu/mus-theo/csw.html
Committee on the Status of Women, Society for Music Theory, which promotes gender equity and feminist scholarship in areas related to music theory and serves as a repository of information about women and music; maintained by David Loberg Code (e-mail address: code@wmich.edu); includes Bibliography of Resources in Music and Women's Studies, syllabi, and links.

http://www2.huji.ac.il/~mtscop/mus/muswem.html
Music and Musicology Resources: Women in Music; Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Mt. Scopus Library; developed by Atara Kotliar (e-mail address: kotliar@har1.huji.ac.il), Subject Specialist in Music; this is the university's central library and also the national library of Israel with the largest repository of Judaica in the world; includes good links.

About the Author

J. Michele Edwards, professor of music at Macalester College (St. Paul, MN) and the former Director of the Women and Gender Studies Program (1988-91, 1993-95), received three degrees in music from the University of Iowa: B.M. (1967); M.A. (1970); and a D.M.A. (1983) in choral conducting with significant study in musicology. In 1988-90, she served as the Macalester Project Director for a Ford Foundation grant ($261,500) for a six-college consortium working to incorporate new research about women of color into the curriculum. Twice Edwards has worked with College Music Society's national summer curriculum workshops, first as Coordinator of Musical Activities for "Institute on the Study and Teaching of Women and Music" (1993) and as Director of Choral Activities for "Women, Music and Gender" (1996). Her scholarship focuses on women making music with particular attention to the twentieth century. She contributed two chapters to the textbook, *Women and Music: A History*, edited by Karin Pendle (Indiana University Press, 1991), on early music and on 20th-century North American music. Edwards prepared over 20 articles for *The Norton/Grove Dictionary of Women Composers* (1994) about Japanese composers and 20th-century American musicians. In addition to being a musicologist, Edwards is conductor for the 100-voice Macalester Festival Chorale and Harmonia Mundi, a professional woodwind and keyboard ensemble.

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➢ ***Introductory Bibliography for Curriculum Transformation***

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